



Chatham Borough Police Department

PRESS RELEASE



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Dear Chatham Borough Residents,

First, we are writing to thank you for your efforts at helping us reduce the overall pace of stolen vehicles in Chatham Borough. In early 2022, due in part to our close proximity to Route 24, Chatham Borough represented approximately 23% of all stolen vehicles in Morris County. Through our enhanced police and community partnership, especially your increased diligence in locking your car doors and removing keys/fobs/valuables from your vehicles, we have now reduced that number to roughly 8%. Additionally, in January of this year, Chatham Borough experienced 8 attempts and 6 stolen vehicles; however, with attempts rising to an even higher figure of 11 in the month of June, the Borough experienced only one vehicle stolen during that same period. Likewise, since July 7th, we've experienced only 1 additional stolen vehicle to date. This indicates clearly that our messaging is working, and that the pace of stolen vehicles has reduced considerably. Feel free to visit our police website (Public Posting, Forms & Documents Section) to view updated statistics regarding stolen vehicles - <http://chathamborough.org/departments/police>.

Second, as we anticipated from the very beginning, criminals have become increasingly frustrated with our success in the locking of our cars, and are currently resorting to more serious tactics to accomplish their goals. This trend has become increasingly evident throughout NJ, including here in Morris County, over the past few weeks. Locally, it is occurring most prominently toward the eastern side of the County. The criminals are entering homes (1) with remote garage door openers obtained from unlocked cars, (2) through unlocked residence windows/doors, or (3) by simply forcing open residence windows/doors. Once inside, they search and steal keys/fobs and other valuables, ultimately driving off with residents' vehicles.

Consequently, in the early morning hours of 9/2/22, two homes in Madison Borough, and one home in Chatham Borough, were each victims of an attempted home invasion. In Madison, the suspects attempted to gain access to one of the homes by using an electronic garage door opener they stole from an unlocked vehicle in the driveway; however, the garage door opener was not operational. The suspects then moved on to a nearby home in Madison and were able to successfully open an unlocked window. Fortunately, the home had an alarm system that scared off the suspects when it sounded.

The suspects then travelled to the Meadowbrook area of Chatham Borough, which is in close proximity to the victimized Madison homes, and again were able to successfully open an unlocked window. Once again, the home was alarmed and the suspects fled the scene when the alarm sounded.

In this matter, Chatham Borough is hardly alone. In fact, many other municipalities across the State experienced similar type incidents just yesterday evening, highlighting the broader nature of this recent disturbing trend.

At present, the Chatham Borough Police Department is diligently collecting valuable evidence and intelligence, as well as working with its County, State, and (fellow) local police partners, to facilitate our goal of identifying, apprehending, and fully prosecuting these criminals for their crimes. Moreover, should we encounter suspects committing or fleeing home invasions, our officers will carefully pursue and take appropriate actions to apprehend them.

Just yesterday morning, the Chatham Borough Police Department joined a group of local police partners at East Hanover's Police Headquarters to discuss and coordinate tactics on recent issues surrounding stolen vehicles and violent crime (see below).



A consortium of police departments from Chatham Borough, Chatham Township, East Hanover, Florham Park, Madison, Montville, Livingston, and Fairfield, together with the Morris Co. Sheriff's Department, the Morris Co. Prosecutor's Office, and the Morris Co. OEM, are now actively working together to address this growing problem of stolen vehicles and possible associated violent crimes.

In addition, Federal authorities, including the FBI, have joined the effort to combat what has been described as one of the most well-organized and determined car theft rings in recent memory.

Rest assured that Chatham Borough will use all available resources, including those from our Federal, State, County, and local police partners, to address this disturbing new crime trend, and to protect our residents and visitors from these utter miscreants.

In conclusion, we urge the public to continue partnering with the Chatham Borough Police Department to help keep everyone safe during this unfortunate statewide crime trend. Below are a few tips to follow:

- Continue to lock your vehicles and remove all keys/fobs, valuables, and remote garage door openers.
- Increase outdoor motion lighting around your home.
- Ensure cameras around your home are operational, and provide us the video in the event of anything suspicious.
- Register your cameras with the CBPD.
- Lock all doors, windows, and garages.
- Activate home alarm systems.
- Add sensors to connect your garage doors with your home alarm system.
- Call 9-1-1 immediately in case of emergency.
- See Something, Say Something!

Thank you for your cooperation and support.

Thaddeus J. Kobylarz
Mayor

Brian K. Gibbons
Chief of Police